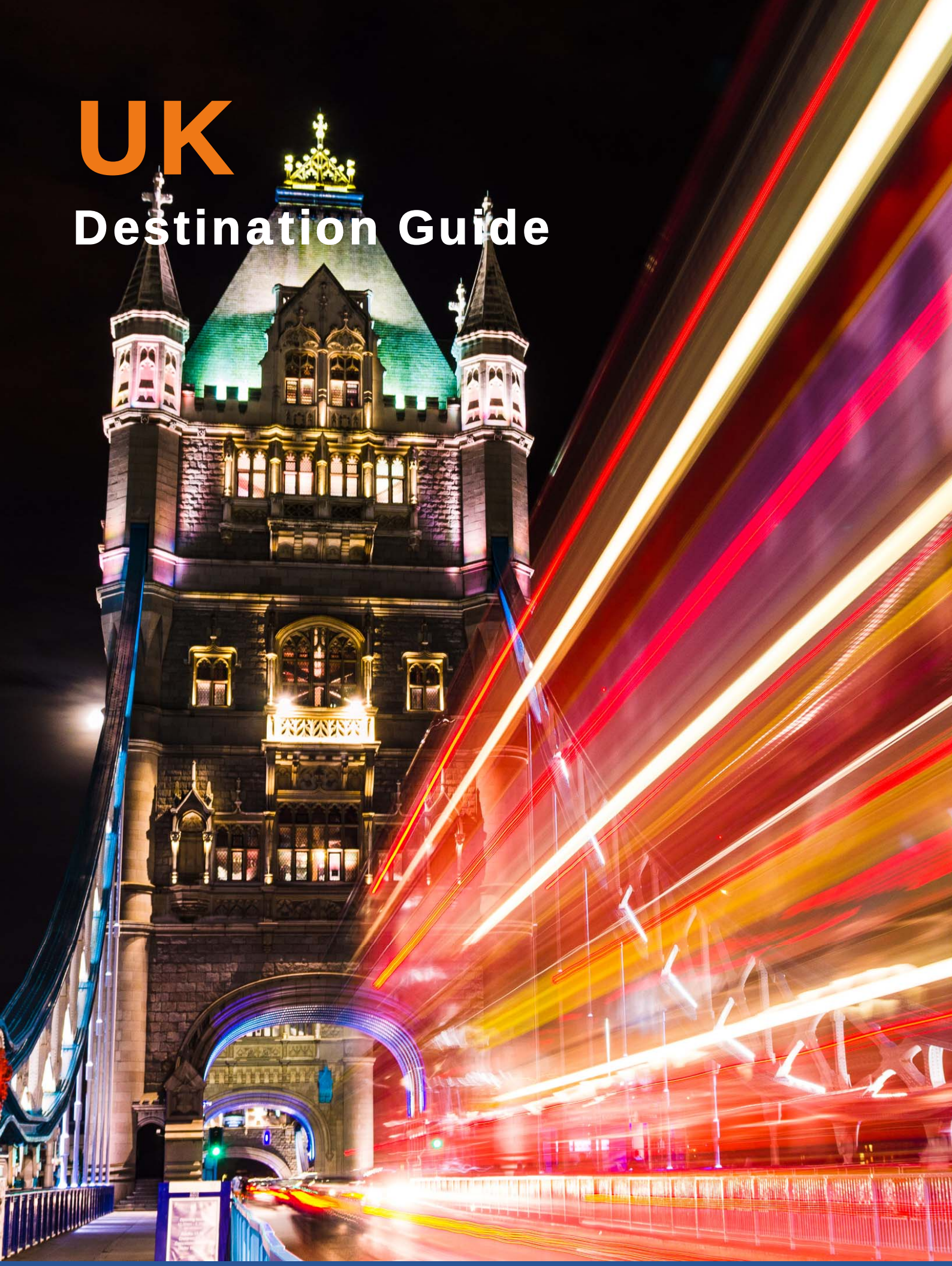
UK

Destination Guide



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Renting a Car in the UK

Class	Fuel Capacity	Type	Transmission	Fuel/Air Cond.
M = Mini	0.8 - 1.0	B = 2 Door	M = Manual	R = Yes
E = Economy	1.0 - 1.4	D = 4 Door	A = Automatic	N = No
C = Compact	1.2 - 1.6	C = 2/4 door	N = Manual 4WD	D = Diesel Air
F = Full size	2.0 - 3.2	L = Limousine	C = Manual AWD	Q = Diesel No Air
P = Premium	2.0 - 4.2	S = Sports Car	B = Auto 4WD	H = Hybrid Air
L = Luxury	2.0 - 4.2	T = Convertible	D = Auto AWD	I = Hybrid No Air
X = Special	1.2 - 3.0	J = All Terrain		E = Electric Air
		R= Recreational		C = Electric No Air
		F = 4 Wheel Drive		
		X = Special		
		K = Commercial Van/Truck		
		P = Ute		
		X = Special		
		E = Executive		

Examples:
ECMN: E = Economy
C = 2 or 4 door
M = Manual
N = No Air con
FDAR: F = Full Size
D = 4 Door
A = Automatic
R = Air con

How do I figure out which car is right for me?

There are plenty of car rental options to choose from depending on your needs. Consider where you're travelling, how many people are travelling and the style of driving you intend to do. You can use the ACRISS system detailed above to find the car that suits your needs. This is an internationally recognised code that will ensure that you get the same standard of vehicle wherever you rent.

Automatic and Manual Transmissions

Automatic and manual vehicles are available in the UK, though automatic may be more expensive and suppliers may have fewer available.

Do I need a credit card?

Yes. A credit card will be needed for a deposit when collecting your vehicle. The deposit is generally the insurance excess of the rental car which can vary between $385 and $3,500 (+tax) depending on the category of vehicle you have booked and the rate type.

Collecting at an airport in the UK

At most British airports, rental companies will have a desk in the arrivals hall and vehicles will be located within walking distance. However, at smaller airports you may be required to collect your vehicle from a downtown depot. Usually a courtesy transfer will be provided from the airport to the depot in this instance. Auto Europe Australia offer all-inclusive prices which generally include any location/airport fees that may otherwise apply. Remember to check at time of booking to ensure your rental will include all airport fees.

Can I collect my vehicle in one British city and drop it off in another?

Yes, this is certainly possible. In most cases, there are no fees for one way rentals within mainland UK, but in some cases there may be a one-way fee payable when you collect your rental. Check with Auto Europe Australia and your supplier before you travel to enquire about additional costs.

Rental Vehicle Insurance

Rental Vehicle Insurance

British law requires all vehicles to have Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance, although your car rental supplier should already have comprehensive insurance covering their vehicles. In the case of an accident, it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately and an excess will be due.

Car Rental Companies in the United Kingdom will normally include:

- **Third Party Insurance and Compulsory Insurance:** This will be included in your car hire price. This covers other people's injury and any damage to their vehicle.
- **Collision Damage Waiver (CDW):** This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle and is normally included in prepaid car hire prices. Rentals are usually subject to liability excess, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car or by taking out Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance.
- **Theft and Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in the prepaid car rental price.
- **Liability Insurance:** This limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is normally included in the prepaid car hire price.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rate. It is considered an optional extra that you can take out upon collection of the car.

Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance

When renting a vehicle, the rental rates include basic insurance. However, in the event that the vehicle is stolen or accidentally damaged, there is usually an insurance excess amount which the driver is liable to pay to the rental company. To avoid any unexpected costs opt for Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance which will offer a reimbursement for the supplier's damage and theft excess to a maximum for AU$5,000. Simply add this onto your car rental booking prior to departure and you could save thousands of dollars in case of an accident. To find out more, simply call Auto Europe on 1300 656 601 or visit the Auto Europe website.

The Auto Europe Hire Car Excess Refund Insurance is managed by Accident & Health International Underwriting Pty Limited, ABN 26 053 335 952, AFSL 238261 and underwritten by CGU Insurance Limited, ABN 27 004 478 371, AFSL 238291.

Driving in the UK

Driving Laws in the United Kingdom

- Cars drive on the **left** hand side of the road and the driver sits on the right.
- Familiarise yourself with your rental car and its controls before you leave the depot.
- Observe the speed limits. Speed cameras, hand held devices and portable speed detection devices are used by patrolling police to catch speeding drivers. Hefty fines are issued for excessive speed.
- The maximum blood alcohol level is 0.08% and DUI drivers can face hefty fines or imprisonment. Be smart, don't drink and drive.
- Drivers are permitted to execute a U-turn or a 3 point turn on any UK road unless it's expressly forbidden.
- When driving on rural roads, be patient. You may get stuck behind a slow moving vehicle, but it is dangerous to attempt to overtake on narrow winding roads. Make use of the *lay-bys*, where one driver can move to the side of the road and give way to oncoming traffic.

- Keep your headlights on during the day, especially on country roads and in foggy or misty conditions.
- Unless otherwise indicated, the speed limits in the United Kingdom are:
  - Built up areas: 30mph
  - Country roads: 40-50mph
  - Single Carriageways: 60mph
  - Dual Carriageways: 70mph
  - Motorways: 70mph
- The driver and all passengers must wear a seat belt at all times.
- Child Safety: Children must be properly secured in an appropriate Child Safety Seat:
  - * Up to 13kgs (birth to 9-12months): Rear-facing baby seat.
  - * 9-18kgs (9 months to 4 yrs): Forward facing child seat.
  - * 15-25kgs (4-6yrs) or 15kgs and up: Forward facing child seat or booster seats.
  - * 22-36kgs (6yrs and up): Forward facing child seat or booster cushions.
  - * Up to 11 years and under 135cm: children must be seated in a child seat booster cushion or seat.
  - * 12 years up: a seat belt must be worn.
- It is illegal to talk on a mobile phone while driving in the UK.
- Motorcyclists must wear a helmet.
- Park only where it's permitted. Check to see if there are parking meters where you will have to "pay and display" the parking receipt on the dashboard of your car. Otherwise you run the risk of heavy fines and clamping in major cities.

Driving in the UK

Parking

In major cities, parking zones are differentiated by coloured zones.

- Blue Zones: short term (1 to 1½ hours)
- Green Zones: longer periods (2 to 4 hours)
- Red Zones: parking not permitted at any time.

After 6pm and when parking restrictions have been lifted, you can park on streets with a single yellow line. You cannot park on streets with double yellow lines.

There are various types of free and paid parking options within the UK. In the larger cities, parking can be costly and for limited periods of time.

Min & Max Age Requirements

Min Driving Age: Usually 21, however in some regions the minimum age is 25.

Young Driver Surcharge: Drivers aged 21-22 years may be charged from £15+tax per day, drivers aged 23-24 years may be charged from £11+tax per day.

Max Driving Age: The majority of locations in the UK do not have a maximum driving age, however there may be restrictions for drivers aged 70-75 in some regions. In certain situations, aged drivers may be required to hold a letter from their GP stating they are healthy and fit to drive. Check with the supplier for further details.

Licence Requirements

A full driving licence is required to drive in the UK. All drivers must have held a full valid driving licence for a minimum of one year. Australian residents are not required by law to have an international drivers licence, although it is recommended since an international licence holds more credibility with the local traffic police than your home driving licence. Contact your local motoring association for further information.

Cross Border Fees and One Way Rentals

Travelling between England, Scotland and Wales:

There are no additional fees to travel between England, Scotland and Wales. One way rentals will not incur an international one way fee and travel to islands such as Isle of Man, Isle of White, Shetland Islands and Orkney Island is allowed with no additional charge. Travel to the Channel Islands will sometimes incur an additional fee. One way rentals to islands are generally not permitted. Some suppliers will not allow travel off the islands if picking up on the island. Check with Auto Europe Australia upon booking for further information.

One Way Car Rentals:

There may be additional charges to collect from one city and drop off in another, depending on the supplier. Most suppliers will not charge a one way fee if a vehicle is dropped off at another location in the UK. Some companies will not permit international one way rentals from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland. Before you book, find out any other additional fees that might be charged by the supplier. Remember that you may not be covered by insurance if you travel to another country without the car rental company's permission.

FAQs & UK Regions

I'd like to visit Ireland on my holiday and return my car to the UK. Is this possible?

This is possible. Most car rental companies will permit travel to Northern Ireland with little or no fee, however travel to the Republic of Ireland may incur an additional fee. Check with Auto Europe for further details.

Can I collect my car rental in mainland UK and drop it off in the Republic of Ireland?

Not all suppliers will permit international one ways from mainland UK to the Republic of Ireland. It is permitted through some suppliers, though a substantial one way fee will apply. The specific fee will depend on the car rental supplier. Check with Auto Europe Australia when you book your car hire.

Should I take out additional insurance on my car rental?

Rental rates will include basic insurance: Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Third Party Liability and Theft Protection. In the event that your rental vehicle is accidentally damaged —regardless of who is at fault— or stolen, the insurance excess is the maximum for which you are liable.

Should I hire a GPS for driving in the United Kingdom?

GPS hire is available from Auto Europe Australia. The GPS is delivered direct to your home or travel agent before departure. GPS units can also be requested direct with some suppliers, however this will be at their own rates. If time is short or you would simply prefer to collect your GPS unit together with your rental, this may be an option for you.

What do I do if I want to extend my car rental whilst I'm in the United Kingdom?

Once the car rental has commenced you will have to call the depot where you initially collected the vehicle. If the car is available to be extended, you will be offered additional days at the local rate.

London

Southeast: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex

Southwest: Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

East England: Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk

East Midlands: Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Northampton, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire

West Midlands: Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, West Midlands County, Shropshire, Staffordshire

Yorkshire & the Humber: Yorkshire and Lincolnshire

Northwest: Liverpool and Manchester

Northeast: Northumberland, County Durham, Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley

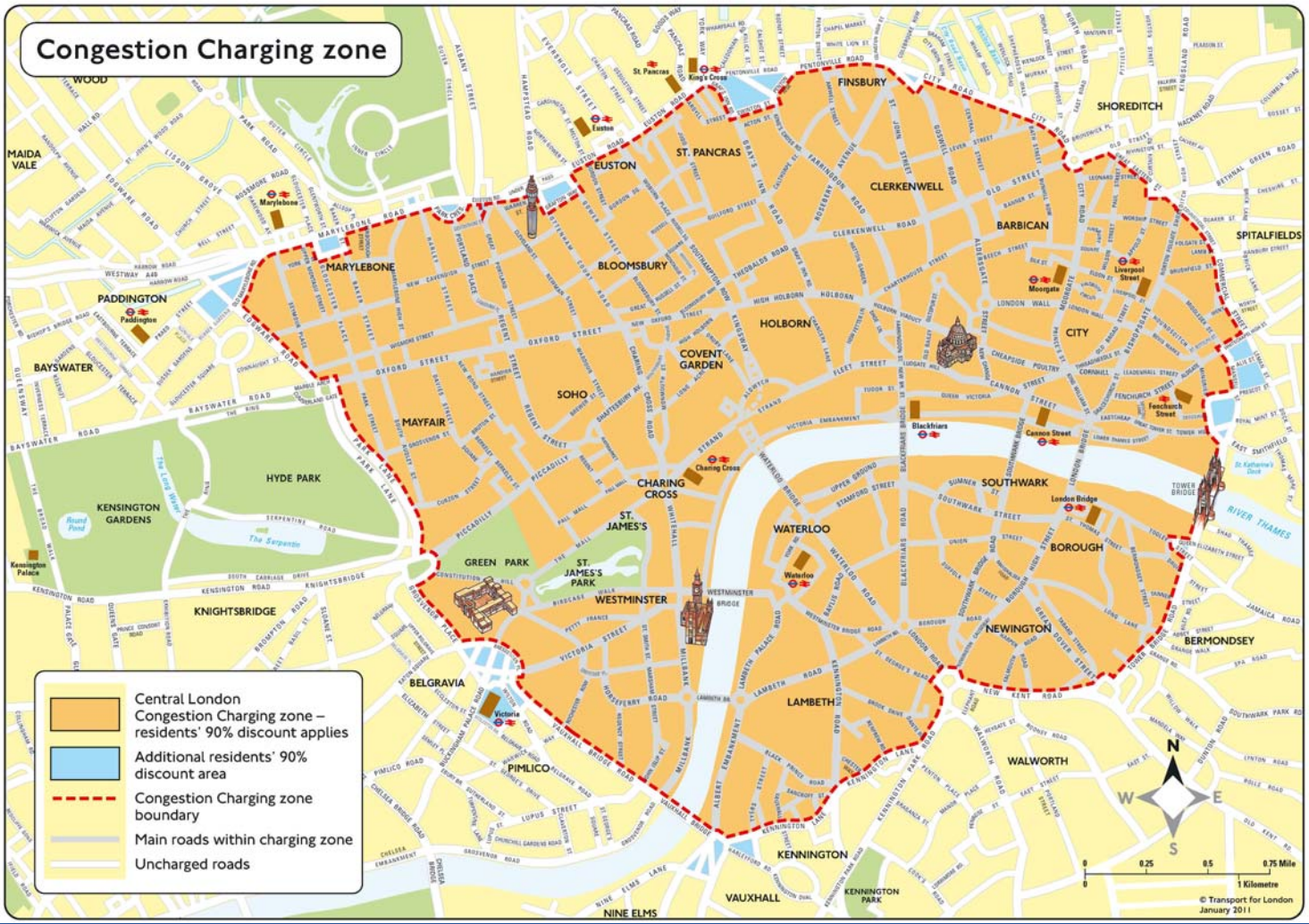
Scotland

Wales

Northern Ireland

UK Congestion Zones

The congestion charge is a fee charged to those that drive their vehicles within certain areas during periods of peak demand. It is used to help reduce traffic congestion and pollution. So far in the UK, London and Durham currently charge congestion fees. The daily charge for driving or parking within these areas between 7.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday starts from £10. For more information, visit http://www.tfl.gov.uk/



London

London is the capital of the United Kingdom and one of the world's largest financial centres. London is dynamic, multicultural and a historically vibrant epicentre of Europe. Whether its festivals, fashion, food, fun or film you're after, you will find it all in the sprawling metropolis of London. The sheer scale of London ensures visitors a never ending supply of sites to see and cultures to experience. Be entertained at Knightsbridge and Soho, be charmed by the bountiful green places and Royal Parks, then unwind at a traditional, cosy English pub in what is indisputably one of the greatest cities in the world.

Attractions

Buckingham Palace - Tour tickets start from around £17 for an adult ticket

Big Ben - One of London's most loved landmarks

Museums and Galleries - Visit the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert, Sir John Soane's Museum, Tate Modern or the Natural History and Science Museum

Trafalgar Square - One of the UK's most popular visitor attractions

Parks - Stroll through Westminster, Holland, Hyde, or Regent's Parks

Street markets - Take a trip to the Camden Market, Portobello Market or the Greenwich Market

Westminster Abbey - Attend the Evensong service and see the remarkable Abbey choir sing, or simply tour the spectacular interior

The London Eye - Enjoy unrivalled views of the whole city

The Tower of London - Be fascinated by the gruesome tales and vast history behind this famous attraction

The Shard - The tallest building in the European Union

Events

January

New Year's Day Parade - Thousands of people line the streets of the city of Westminster to watch the 10,000 or so participants

London Boat Show - Europe's premiere boat show

May

Chelsea Flower Show - The most famous flower show in the United Kingdom

June

City of London Festival - Annual arts festival covering two to three weeks in June and July

Carnival de Cuba - Largest Cuban culture celebration in Europe

Trooping the Colour - Ceremony performed by regiments of the British and Commonwealth Armies

August

Great British Beer Festival - Taste over 800 ales, ciders and beer

Notting Hill Festival - The largest street festival in Europe

September

Chelsea Antiques Fair - The United Kingdom's oldest fair, held in the Chelsea Old Town Hall

Open House London - A 2-day event promoting appreciation of architecture

October

London Film Festival - Screening more than 300 features

November

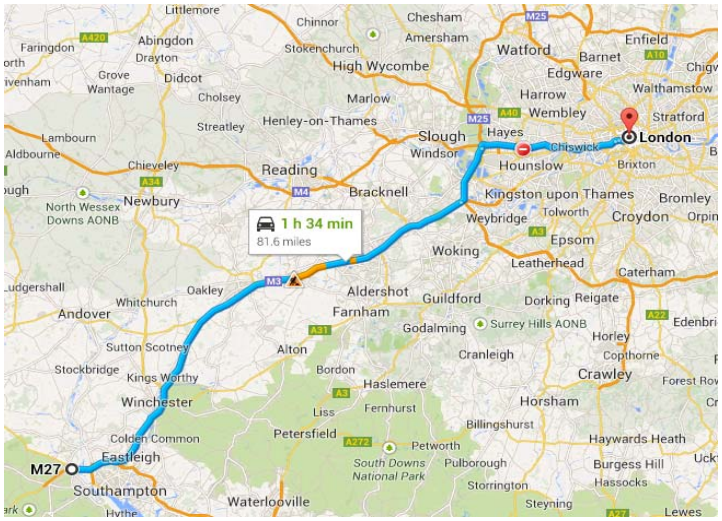
Christmas Lighting Ceremony - Held throughout London to prepare for the winter holidays

Lord Mayor's Show - The most popular civic procession in the world

Self Drive Tours: London

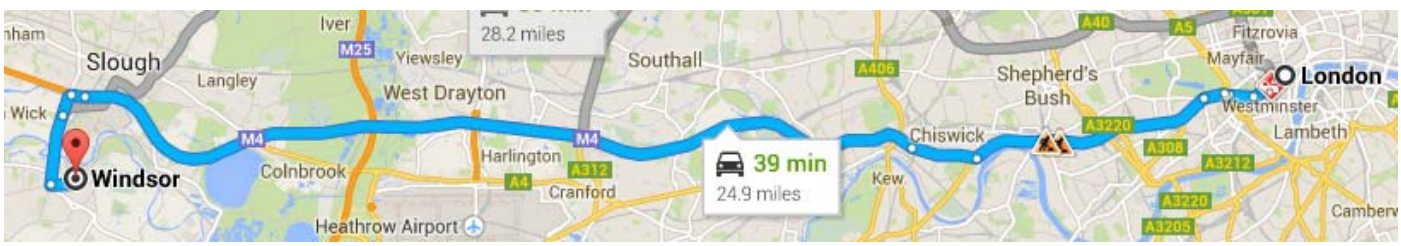
London to New Forest

Travel to New Forest from London by taking the M3 out of London and to the M27. This drive will take approximately an hour and a half. Once you arrive in New Forest, visit the New Forest National Park, the smallest National Park in the United Kingdom. Stroll through the historic streets of Hythe Village or visit the Calshot Castle. If you're looking for something slightly more active, consider heading to the New Forest Water Park for a fun-filled day.



London to Windsor

For the perfect day out of the city, take a leisurely drive along the M4 down to Windsor. This drive is less than one hour and offers an extraordinary amount of things to do for any visitor. Stroll along the quaint, historical streets, take a half day boating trip on the river and finish the day with a tour of Windsor Castle. This castle is the largest inhabited castle in the world and is still used as an official residence by the British Monarch. Queen Elizabeth II spends most of the weekends at the castle entertaining for both private and state functions. After a the castle, stop at one of the many restaurants and cafes for a bite to eat before returning to the bustling metropolis of London.



Southeast England

The southeast region of England consists of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex. Almost all of these regions are within a two hour drive from the centre of London, and are firm favourites amongst Londoners and seasoned visitors alike. With gorgeous seaside towns, vibrant lifestyles, cities built around world famous universities and rich culture and history, the southeast of England has something to offer every traveller!

Attractions

Brighton & Hove, East Sussex

Brighton Beach and Pier – Fantastic restaurants, bars and clubs in a top seaside location

Visit the Royal Pavilion – Magnificent palace created by King George IV

Oxford, Oxfordshire

Oxford University - Explore the wonderful architecture of University buildings

Shopping in Oxford – Go to the Covered Market, for a range of items, or hit the High Street for unique boutiques and shops

Canterbury, Kent

Canterbury Cathedral – This magnificent cathedral dates back to 597AD, with beautiful stained glass and is the home to the Archbishop of Canterbury

St Augustine's Abbey– These remains are World Heritage listed

Dover, Kent

The White Cliffs of Dover – The scenic North Downs Way will take you along the low hills along the coast

Windsor & Eton

Windsor Castle – See the largest occupied castle in the world, and the official residence of the Queen of England

Take a tour of Eton College – See where Princes William and Harry were educated

Frogmore House – This elegant property is the final resting place for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert

Events

February

Brighton & Hove Half Marathon - One of the longest established and most popular road races in the UK

March

Oxford Literary Festival - Enjoy panels, readings and discussions in Oxford

Brighton and Hove Food and Drink Festival –An award winning gourmet food event

May

Brighton Festival– Three week festival with concerts, parades and street entertainers in Brighton

June

Cowley Road Carnival, Oxford's largest festival

Stour Festival – 10 day music festival in Canterbury

July

Kent Beer Festival - Held at Canterbury's Merton Farm

August

Classical Proms – Open-air classical concert in Oxford

Herne Bay Festival – Music, fireworks and street parades in Canterbury

September

Windsor Festival – Annual classical music event

Hop Hoodening– A traditional English festival in Kent

October

White Night– Illuminations, city tours and street performances fill Brighton

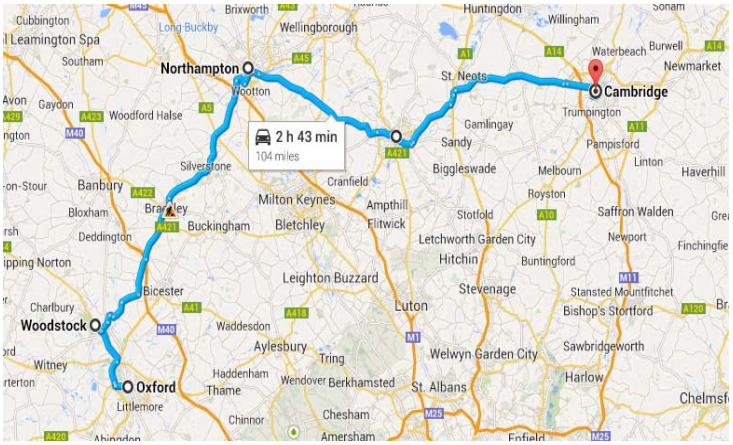
November

Bonfire Night – Celebrated across southeast England

December

Burning the Clocks – Winter solstice event in Brighton

Self Drive Tours: Southeast England



Tour the Colleges

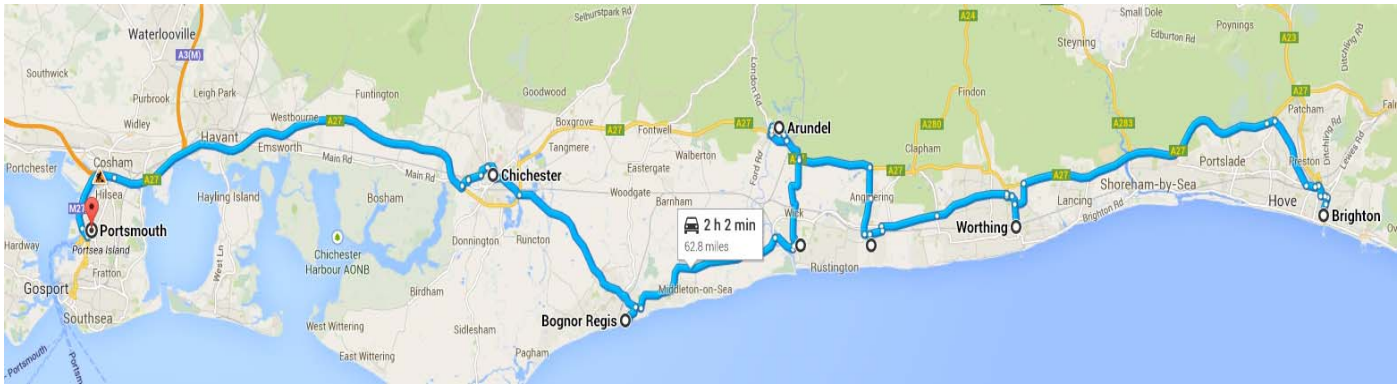
Follow this drive to see England's two most famous universities: Oxford and Cambridge. Begin in Oxford, where you'll be able to tour the university and its extensive grounds. Head north on the A44, stopping off in the small town of Woodstock, the location of the Blenheim Palace. The palace is open to the public and provides a nice stopping point along the way. Drive north east to the town of Northampton, which is home to the Guildhall and holds one of the United Kingdom's oldest markets. Northampton also has its own university open for exploration.

From Northampton, follow the A428 through Bedford and onto Cambridge. Explore the many colleges that make up this university, as well as the beautiful parks and gardens, museums and churches.

Brighton to Portsmouth

This route follows the coast from Brighton to the town of Portsmouth. Begin this tour from the seaside town of Brighton & Hove, following the A27 west through Worthing, East Preston, Littlehampton and up to Arundel. Stop here to check out the town's 11th century castle and cathedral, as well as quaint museums, tea rooms and antique shops.

Drive down to Littlehampton and to Bognor Regis, situated near the coast. Get back on the A259 to the town of Chichester. Pick up the A27 and head west along to the city of Portsmouth. This lovely town is rich in naval and cultural history. While here, the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, the Spinnaker Tower and the Southsea Castle are all well worth a visit. Outside of Portsmouth is the Portchester Castle, a well preserved Roman fortification just a five minute drive from town.



Southwest England

Southwest England has long been regarded as one of the most beautiful parts of the United Kingdom. This region consists of Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. The Southwest holds wild moors, great beaches, stunning coastlines, charming villages and vibrant cities. All this, along with a history and heritage like no other! Southwest England is perfect for the self drive holiday.

Attractions

Bristol

Clifton Suspension Bridge – Enjoy views of the Avon Gorge

Brunel's SS Great Britain–The world's first great ocean liner

Gloucestershire

Berkeley Castle – The fantastic medieval fortress where King Edward II was murdered

The Cotswolds – Discover the gentle hill country and view gardens and lovely historic houses

Gloucester Cathedral – See this Harry Potter featured locale

Somerset

Bath – Visit the Roman Baths and Pump Room and take a soak in the Thermae Bath Spa

Glastonbury – Visit the Tor and the Abbey

Go Cave Diving– Learn the history and mystical legends of Cheddar Gorge and Wookey Hole Caves

Dorset

Jurassic Coast – Uncover fossils and prehistoric remains

Wiltshire

Stonehenge – A mysterious, remarkable construction listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Salisbury Cathedral - An 800 year old cathedral with the tallest spire in the United Kingdom

Cornwall

St. Michael's Mount – Visit this iconic island, only accessible by foot at low tide or by boat at high tide.

Isles of Scilly

Take a Boat Tour – Visit historical villages and museums on this English archipelago

Events

March

Somerset Spring Festival of Food & Drink - A showcase of Somerset's best produce

April

Bristol Walking Festival - UK's largest walking festival

May

Bath Dance Festival - Celebration of dance

Mayfest - Contemporary theatre festival in Bristol

Cheese-Rolling Race - Competitors in Gloucestershire roll cheese down a steep hill and chase after it

June

Glastonbury Festival– World famous music festival in Somerset

September

Jane Austen Festival - Celebrate all things Jane Austen in the author's former home of Bath

Newent Onion Fayre - This Gloucestershire fair that is all about onions, complete with an onion eating contest among other activities

October

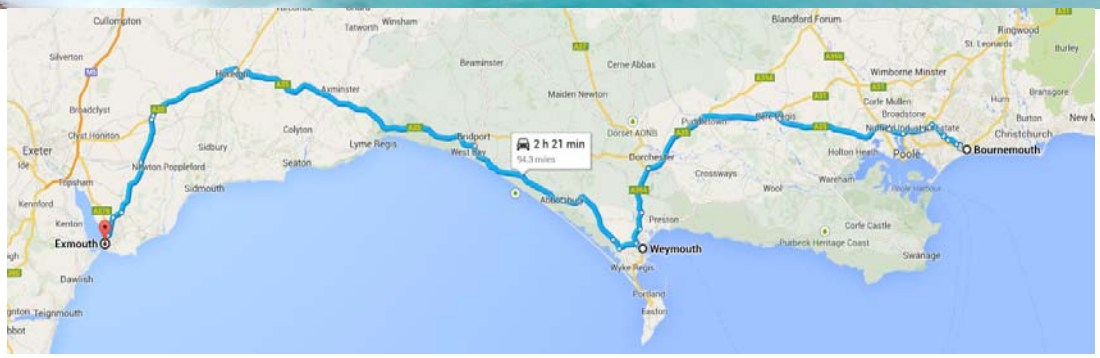
British National Surfing Championships - Hang ten at Fistral Beach, Newquay

November

Mozart Festival - Have a ball at this classical music festival in the town of Bath

Self Drive Tours: Southwest England

The Jurassic Coast



Discover the wild beauty and majesty that the Jurassic Coast has to offer and uncover hidden prehistoric gems along the way. Begin this tour in the town of Exmouth and follow the South West Coast Path, which is a national trail, to the town of Bournemouth. Along the way, you'll be able to stop in Weymouth and other destinations to fossick for fossils from the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. Visitors are permitted to collect fossils that have washed out of the cliffs and bluffs, but make sure to follow the fossil hunting code. The areas around Lyme Regis and Charmouth are recommended for this activity, due to the high level of erosion.

London to Bristol

Take the M4 out of London and head to Reading, where you will find two universities, the Abbey Ruins and the Forbury Gardens, along with great pubs and restaurants. Follow the A33 to Basingstoke, then onto the A303 along to Amesbury. Amesbury is home to the world famous Stonehenge, so stop for an hour or two and explore the surrounding countryside and this incredibly famous ancient wonder.

Back on the A36, drive through the picturesque countryside while heading north into Bath. Explore the historical Roman Baths, have lunch in a quaint English pub, see the Bath Abbey and stroll the medieval streets, which are lined by historic terraces and wonderful shops. Only a 30 minute drive north west, you'll find the vibrant city of Bristol. Drive over the Clifton Suspension Bridge, explore the Avon Gorge and it's dynamic harbour side or stroll through Old Bristol.

Eastern England

The lush rural landscape of Eastern England consists of the regions of Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. This region lies north east of London and maintains an unspoilt character amongst its sprawling countryside and waterways. East Anglia is home to medieval villages, quaint hamlets, university towns and Edwardian seaside resorts. All this in addition to rivers and fens, rich farmland and rolling hills. Discover ancient ruins, soaring spires in magnificent cathedrals and market towns in Eastern England

Attractions

Cambridgeshire

Visit the historic colleges – See King's College and King's Chapel, St. John's College, Queens' College and Trinity College, as well as their surrounding gardens in Cambridge.

Explore the Sedgwick Museum – One of the oldest of the university museums

Norfolk

Norwich – See the Norwich Cathedral, Dragon Hall and Norwich Castle

Great Yarmouth – One of England's most popular seaside resorts and home to great beaches, entertainment and attractions

Essex

Colchester – See Colchester Castle, the zoo and Carter's Vineyard in the UK's oldest town

Suffolk

Ipswich – Unwind in open, green spaces, visit the Christchurch Mansion and discover the Victorian wet dock for fantastic waterfront restaurants and bars

Drive through the Stour Valley – Discover quaint villages and stunning rural scenery

Hertfordshire

St. Albans – Explore the Roman Wall, St. Albans Cathedral, Hatfield House and the medieval clock tower in this beautiful Georgian town

Events

May

Stilton Cheese Rolling– Chase after cheese in the historic town of Stilton

Cambridge Beer Festival – Taste a variety English ales

June

Strawberry Fair– A tasty festival marking the beginning of summer in Cambridge

July

Cambridge Shakespeare Festival – Outdoor performance of famous Shakespeare plays in Cambridge

Big Day out, Cambridge – Outdoor music festival

August

Fenland Country Fair - A traditional country fair Stow-cum-Quy village, Cambridge

Southend Jazz Festival - Enjoy internationally acclaimed jazz musicians in Southend-on-Sea

November

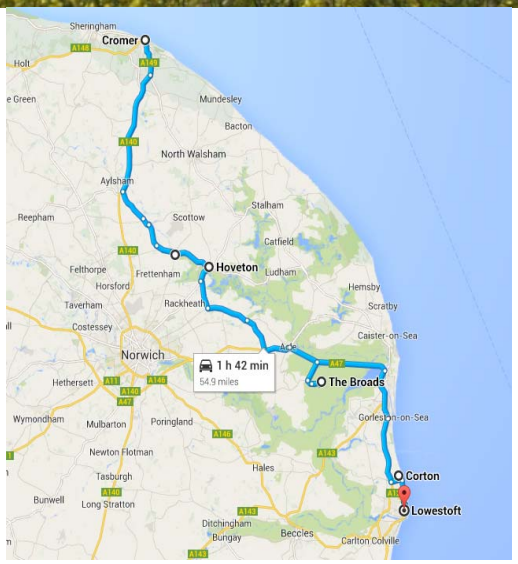
Cambridge Music Festival - 9 days of chamber music, community events and educational programs

December

Christmas Market - Get in the spirit at the Lawford Craft and Farmers Market

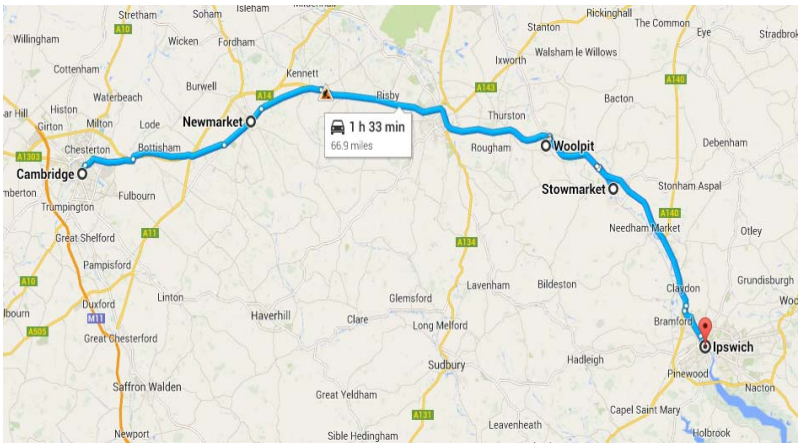
Self Drive Tours: Eastern England

Norwich and The Norfolk Broads



See the best of Norfolk by taking this driving route. Begin in Cromer, where you can visit Sheringham Park and explore gorgeously landscaped gardens. See Felbrigg Hall and Blickling Hall, two remarkable manors you'll pass on this journey, both of which are open for tours. Follow the B1354 through Horstead and Hoveton, which will take you on to The Broads.

The Broads are the UK's largest inland wetlands. You can see some of England's most rare and spectacular flora and fauna in this area, which make their home in the waterways, marshes and estuaries. Visit the floating wildlife centre at NWT Ranworth Broad, plus explore the trails along the reed beds and woodlands. Walk along the boardwalk at Cockshoot Broad to see beautiful water lily beds.



Cambridge to Ipswich

This route takes in the beautiful countryside and elegant towns of Eastern England. After you've seen the universities, cathedrals, parks and rivers of Cambridge, head east along the A11 to Newmarket. This small market town, a great spot for equine enthusiasts, is home to the National Horseracing Museum, the National Stud, and is the head quarters of the British Jockey Club. Driving further east, you'll come across Bury St. Edmund, home to the Abbey Gardens and St. Edmundsbury Cathedral, which are definitely worth a visit.

Follow the A14 through Woolpit and Stowmarket until you reach Ipswich. Here you can enjoy the waterfront marinas, a bustling city centre, twelve medieval churches and green open spaces.

The East Midlands

The East Midlands include Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Northampton, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. With the rich historic past of each culturally diverse community, no two places in the East Midlands will ever be the same. Whether you want to experience the history of the region or the outdoors, the East Midlands offer a great variety of activities to suit everyone.

Attractions

Derbyshire

Bolsover Castle - One of England's most beautiful castles

Matlock Farm Park - Plenty of activities to keep the kids busy and ample places for adults to relax

Leicestershire

The National Space Centre - Featuring real rockets and interactive activities

The Carillon and War Memorial Museum— Dedicated to the men of this region who gave their lives during WWI

Rutland

Go Fish - Rutland offers some of the region's best fishing

Rutland County Museum - Provides visitors with the perfect introduction to England's smallest county

Northhampton

Northampton Museum and Art Gallery—This museum curiously holds the largest collection of footwear in the world, spanning from Ancient Egypt to present day

Nottinghamshire

Nottingham Castle - Take a tour and learn about the castle's colourful history

The Broadway Media Centre - Dedicated to independent and world films, this is a great outing for film lovers

Lincolnshire

Gainsborough Old Hall - A largely unchanged medieval manor

Events

April

St. George Festival— A family friendly festival on Orton Square featuring live music and dance

May

Nottingham Arboretum Festival—This free event includes traditional folk dance, performers and food

Derbyshire Food & Drink Fair—Fantastic local treats

Wirksworth Carnival—A weekend of entertainment in Derbyshire complete with a parade

June

Oakham Festival - A 10 day celebration of the arts in Rutland

Riverside Festival - This Leicester event has all the normal festival goods plus boat rides on the River Soar

July

Stainsby Festival— A non-profit festival focused entirely on live music

August

Annual Bird Fair— Celebrate birds in Rutland

September

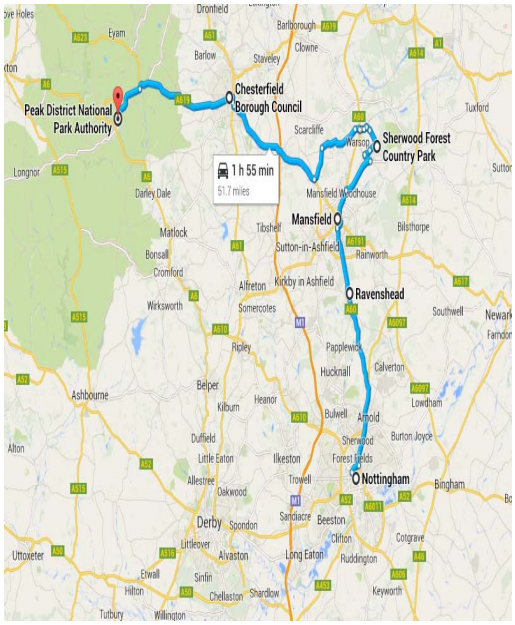
Whitwell Festival of Music— A 3-day music festival with various bands and workshops in Derbyshire

November

Bonfire Night - Features fireworks displays and bonfires in Nottingham

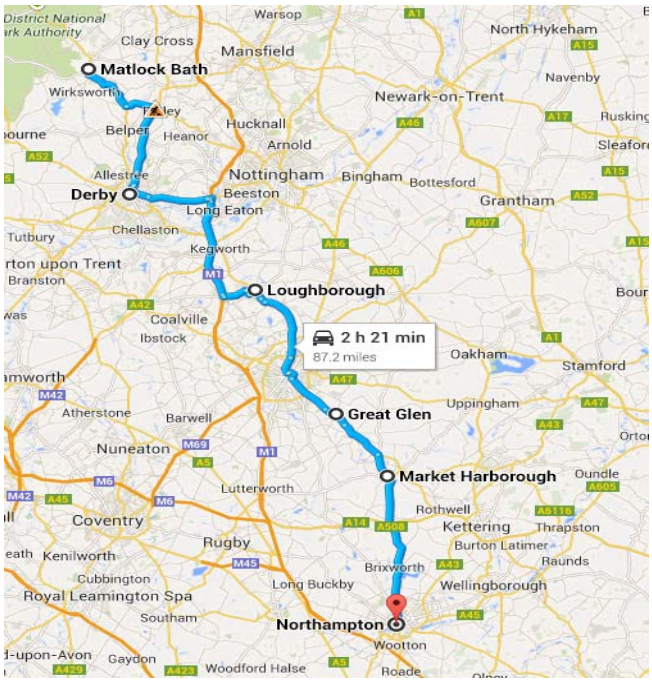
Self Drive Tours: East Midlands

Best of the Parks



Begin this tour in the township of Nottingham, where you can see the Nottingham Castle, Wollaton Hall and, of course, Ye Ole Trip to Jerusalem, which proclaims to be the oldest pub in the United Kingdom. Drive 30 minutes out of town and visit the Sherwood Forest Country Park, home of the legendary Robin Hood. From here, head north on the A60 through Ravenshead to the town of Mansfield. In Mansfield, you will find the Palace Theatre, a magnificent old theatre built in 1910. You can also visit the St John's, St Mark's, St Peter's and St Paul's churches. Drive north west on the A617 through the borough of Chesterfield. Chesterfield is home to fantastic markets and the twisted spire on the Church of St Mary. From here, drive west on Baslow Road, which will take you through to the Peak District National Park. This was the first national park in the British Isle and is the second most visited national park in the world. Here you can enjoy plenty of outdoor activities, including hiking, mountain-biking and horse riding, or just enjoy the scenery and the peaceful countryside.

Matlock Bath to Northampton



Start this trip with a tour around Matlock Bath, which sits along the River Derwent in Derbyshire. Matlock Bath was originally developed as a spa town back in the 1800's, and today is home to the Heights of Abraham Park. The Park's cliff of High Tor is complete with a cable car, museums and attractions. Head south to the town of Derby and through the wild moors, remote farms and tiny villages. In Derby you can visit the Derby Cathedral or the famous Royal Crown Derby Factory. If you're pressed for time, take the M1 south straight to Northampton. If you want to see more of the beautiful English countryside, take the A6 down through Loughborough towards Leicester. From there, head on through Great Glen, Market Harborough and on the A508 to Northampton. Along the way you'll see historic towns and stately homes all throughout this pleasant countryside.

The West Midlands

Explore the diversity of the West Midlands. The tranquil countryside in the Malvern Hills and parts of the National Forest contrast against its multicultural conurbation, which includes one of the UK's largest cities: Birmingham. This impressive region is formed from parts of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, West Midlands County, Shropshire and Staffordshire. The West Midlands is intriguing and charismatic. This area is home to majestic castles, museums, botanical gardens, many historical towns and even Shakespeare!

Attractions

Herefordshire

Hereford Cathedral - Home of the Mappa Mundi, a medieval map of the world from the 13th century

Take a historical Drive - The Black and White Village Trail, which leads through several charming, old English villages

Croft Castle - A majestic stone castle filled with a great historical significance

Worcestershire

Safari & Leisure Park - You'll feel like you've stepped into Africa with the magnificent display of exotic animals

Malvern Hills - An enchanting landscape of mountain ranges and curious wildlife.

Warwickshire

Warwick Castle - A medieval castle that offers "glamping" to its guests

Shropshire

Stokesay Castle - A very romantic 13th century fortified manor house

Hawkstone Historic Park - Explore caves and cliffs

Wroxeter Roman Vineyard - Producing red, white and sparking wines

Staffordshire

Peak District National Park - The UK's first national park

Trentham Estate - This estate holds stunning gardens, a giant observation wheel, monkey forest and shopping villages

Lichfield Cathedral - An 800 year old Cathedral with a fascinating history

Events

January

Coventry Festival of Motoring– Annual vintage motor show

The Wassail– Traditional Morris dancing to promote a good harvest in Coventry

April

St. George Day - Medieval festival and parades in Coventry

The Complete Works– Major Shakespeare event in Stratford-upon-Avon

May

Jousting at Warwick Castle – Observe this traditional medieval sport in Coventry

June

Strawberry Fair – Summer festival with concerts and parades in Coventry

July

International Jazz Festival - Live music festival in Birmingham

September

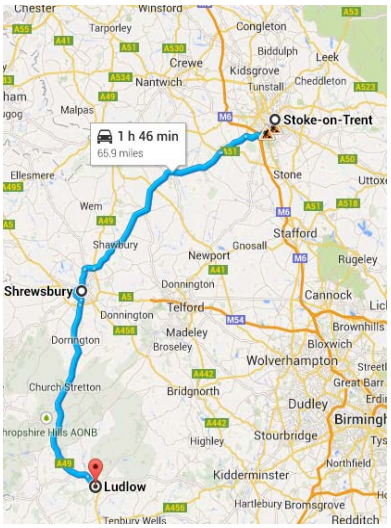
Gardener's Weekend – A popular gardening event in Birmingham

Heritage Open Week– A rare chance to see inside some of Coventry's historic houses

December

Christmas Markets – Festive markets are held across the West Midlands

Self Drive Tours: West Midlands



Stoke-On-Trent to Ludlow

Explore the western scenery on this route from Stoke-on-Trent to the lovely town of Ludlow. Start in the town of Stoke-on-Trent, where you can visit the Wedgewood Visitors Centre and see where some of the world's best fine bone china is produced. Head south west to the medieval town of Shrewsbury, home to the Shrewsbury Abbey, constructed in 1083. From Shrewsbury, drive south on the A49 to the town of Ludlow. This lively, unspoilt market town is perched on a cliff above the River Teme and boasts wonderful churches, a stunning castle and great Georgian architecture. Ludlow is also reputed to have some of the best regional cuisine and festivals in England.

As an optional detour outside of Shrewsbury, visit the Wroxeter Roman Vineyard, just a 20 minute drive away.

Coventry to Worcester

This country route takes you through some of the most splendid countryside in the West Midlands. Begin the tour in the town of Coventry, where you'll find plenty of museums, galleries, great restaurants and pubs. Drive south on the A46 through Warwick, and stop at the magnificent Warwick Castle, surrounded by beautiful manicured gardens.

From Warwick, head south west to the city of Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of Shakespeare. You can also explore the city's historic houses , visit the Royal Shakespeare Company or perhaps cruise the Avon River by row boat.

Drive west along the countryside, through the towns of Oversley Green, Kington and Churchill until you arrive in Worcester. This beautiful town offers a host of historical attractions, including the Worcester Cathedral and the Royal Worcester Porcelain Museum, as well as great shopping, boat trips and riverside walks.

Northwest England

The Northwest encompasses Liverpool and Manchester and is one of the most popular destinations to visit in England. The Northwest boasts world class historical attractions, excellent shopping facilities, arts and culture, in addition to sectacular coasts and countryside. Liverpool and Manchester are also home to a diverse variety of fantastic indoor and outdoor events, which are sure to keep you entertained all throughout the year.

Attractions

Liverpool

Liverpool Cathedral - The largest Anglican Church in the United Kingdom

Haydock Park Racecourse - The most visited racecourse in the country

Beatles Tour - A Magical Mystery bus tour which brings guests to parts of the city important to this legendary band

The McCartney Home - The childhood home of Beatles Star Paul McCartney has been maintained by the National Trust and is available for public tours

The World Museum Liverpool - A popular tourist attraction which features numerous historical artefacts of Liverpool

The Cavern Club- The location of 292 Beatles performances

Anfield Stadium - Home to Liverpool Football club

Manchester

Grab a bargain- Visit the Trafford Centre or the Lowry Outlet Mall to shop and enjoy international cuisine

Arts and Architecture - Head to The Quays for some of the best visual and performing arts, or the Manchester Art Gallery for a more traditional experience

GOOOOAAAL! - Tour the Manchester City Football Club Stadium

The Imperial War Museum - A fascinating museum in North Manchester focusing on the ways in which war shapes our lives

Events

March

Lakes Alive - A collection of world-class performance and arts events in Cumbria

July

Manchester Jazz Festival—Two week so of live jazz

August

The Mathew Street Music Festival - Liverpool's major music festival with pop, rock, soul and more

International Beatle Week - Attend tributes to The Beatles throughout their hometown of Liverpool

September

Illuminations - Visit the seaside town of Blackpool with an amazing free light show

October

Manchester Food and Drink Festival—Enjoy local cuisine and entertainment

November

Greater Manchester Comedy Festival—Have a laugh at this fantastic annual event

December

Liverpool Santa Dash– Bring your Santa outfit and join this holiday fun run

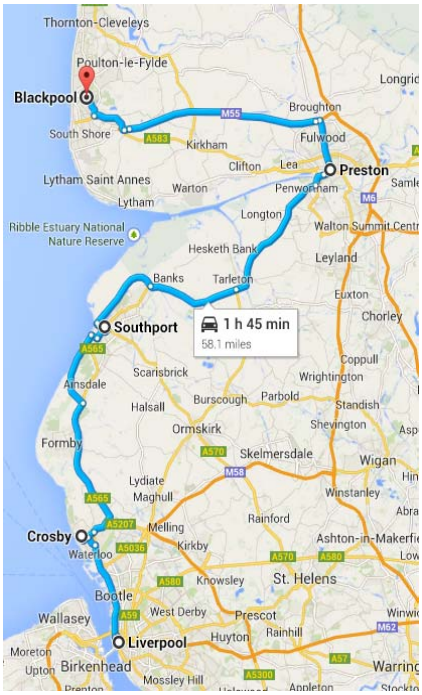
Self Drive Tours: Northwest England

Lancaster to Carlisle

Start in Lancaster by visiting the Lancaster Castle, the Maritime Museum and Williamson Park. Drive north to Appleby-in-Westmoreland for a tour of the 11th Century Appleby Castle, set beside a beautiful riverside near the Conservation Centre. Further north you'll come to Temple Sowerby were you'll be able to see the Acorn Bank Garden and Water Mill.

The township of Penrith is further along the road and home to the ruins of Brougham Castle, originally built in 1092. From Penrith, take the M6 to the town of Carlisle, the final stop on this route. Here you can visit Carlisle Castle, the Cathedral and walk along stretches of Hadrian's wall.

Liverpool to Blackpool



This tour begins in the vibrant city of Liverpool. See the birthplace of The Beatles, tour the famous Liverpool Football Club, enjoy the superb restaurants, clubs, museums and galleries to discover what makes Liverpool such a special city.

Drive north to the coastal town of Crosby and along the A565 to Southport. Explore Lord Street, play a round of golf or just enjoy the great views and relaxed atmosphere of this lovely seaside town. Continue northwest along the A69 to the historical town of Preston. Here you can see the Harris Museum & Art Gallery, the Minster Church and the United Kingdom's National Football Museum. From Preston, head west to the resort town of Blackpool. Be sure to visit the Blackpool Tower and Circus, Sandcastle Waterpark and Pleasure Beach.

Yorkshire and Lincolnshire

Whether you're looking to spend the weekend or the month, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire are packed with activities and events to keep you entertained. If you're after a cultural experience, the hundreds of museums and galleries will not disappoint and if you'd rather escape the city for the weekend, the picturesque countryside will be sure to delight.

Attractions

Yorkshire

Get a fright - Take the Ghost Tour of York

York Minster - Spectacular cathedral dating back to the 14th century

Relax– At the Harrogate Turkish Baths & Health Spa

The York Castle Museum - Learn about everyday life during Victorian and Edwardian England

The Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden– Spend a leisurely afternoon enjoying these wonderfully preserved parks

Lincolnshire

The Lincoln Castle - A medieval fortress was built by William I in the 11th century

The Hardy's Animal Farm – A fantastic interactive activity for the family

Fantasy Island - A family amusement park located in Ingoldmells near Skegness

The Cinema in the Woods - A unique opportunity to watch a movie while you enjoy beautiful natural surroundings

Events

January

Harrogate Pavilions Winter Antiques and Fine Art Fair - Browse collections in Yorkshire

February

Continental Market - A popular Doncaster market

April

Easter Fun - Yorkshire is filled with Easter events

Harrogate Spring Flower Show - A prestigious gardening event in Yorkshire

May

Food Lovers Festival— Save some room for this tasty Yorkshire festival

June

Grassington Festival—15 days of music and art in Yorkshire

Wolds Walking Festival— Participate in a variety of planned walks around Lincolnshire

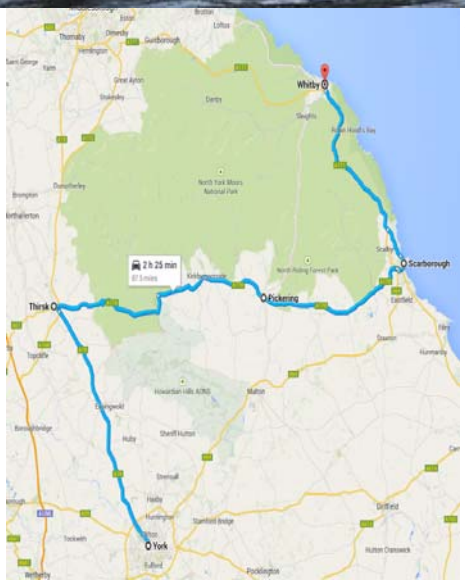
July

Yorkshire Festival—100 days of art and culture

September

Gravity Fields Festival—An event of science, art and heritage in Grantham, Lincolnshire.

Self Drive Tours: Yorkshire and Lincolnshire



York to Whitby

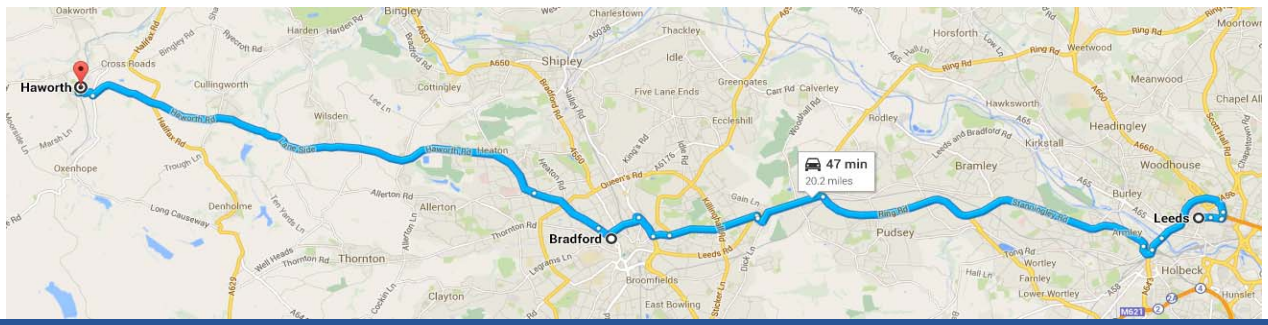
This is one of England's most interesting regions, perfectly suited for a self drive holiday. Begin in the ancient walled town of York, where you can explore the myriad of narrow streets, great museums, restaurants, pubs and the magnificent Gothic Cathedral. Drive north to the small town of Thirsk and head east along the A170 through the beautiful Yorkshire country side. Travel through Pickering and then onto the seaside town of Scarborough. Here you will find white sandy bays, lovely Edwardian buildings and plenty of amusement arcades.

From Scarborough drive north to the charming town of Whitby, with it's old abbey overlooking the picturesque harbour. It's narrow streets with quaint shops, traditional pubs and restaurants boast the best fish and chips in England!

Leeds to Haworth

Start this tour with a day or two in the city of Leeds. Shop in fantastic retail outlets, eat in chic and funky restaurants and enjoy the glamorous urban buzz. Also visit the Leeds Castle and the Town Hall. From Leeds, head west to the city of Bradford, home to the Saltaire, a 19th Century industrial town within the city of Bradford.

From Bradford, explore the surrounding Bronte country. Head towards the township of Haworth and then south to the university town of Hebden Bridge and nearby Heptonstall. In Heptonstall, you will find the church of St. Thomas nestled in the quiet streets and surrounded by cottages. Make Haworth your base so you can explore the surrounding countryside and see the beauty that inspired the Bronte sisters while writing their famous novels.



Northeast England

The Northeast encompasses Northumberland, County Durham, Tyne & Wear and the Tees Valley. It is a diverse and unique region, offering something for everyone. Experience the vibrant towns, quaint villages and sublime landscape at leisure on your self drive holiday.

Attractions

Northumberland

Hadrian's Wall - A world famous attraction once occupied by soldiers from the Roman Empire

The Holy island of Lindisfarne - A wildlife haven and place of pilgrimage

County Durham

The Cathedral and the Castle - A World Heritage Site and one of the most exquisite examples of Romanesque architecture

The High Force Waterfall - Explore the heritage coast or take a walk along the banks of the River Wear

The Escomb Saxon Church - A gem of Durham and over 1300 years old

Tyne & Wear

The Angel of the North - An exquisite statue attracting visitors from across the world

The Baltic Centre of Contemporary Art - An international centre for contemporary art

The Belsay Hall and Gardens - Two historic towers linked by a quaint garden sprawled over more than 30 acres of landscaped grounds

Tees Valley

Explore the outdoors - Try surfing lessons, go on a walking or cycling tour of the city or visit the Saltholme Wildlife Reserve and Discovery Park

Captain Cook's Birthplace Museum –Award-winning, interactive museum about the adventures of one of the world's finest explorers

Events

February

Shrove Tuesday Football—A tradition in Alnwick, this football game is played heading downhill near the castle

April

EAT! Food Festival - An event full of unique activities and dining options in Newcastle

May

Druridge Bay 10k Fun Run—Annual run to raise money for charity

Allendale Fair - A fair where you wear the wrong trousers for a day for charity in Allendale Town

July

Brass: Durham International Festival –A unique "brass-inspired" festival of musical and artistic performances

Newcastle Vegan Festival— An expansive food festival completely dedicated to the vegan lifestyle

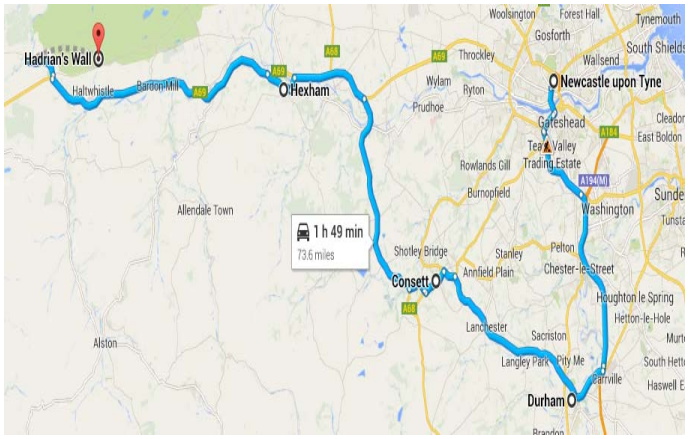
September

The Durham Regatta– The premiere rowing event of Northeast England

Self Drive Tours: Northeast England

Tees Valley

Explore the beautiful Tees Valley and the birthplace of Captain James Cook. Begin in Middlesbrough, visiting the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum and a full size replica of his ship, The Endeavour. Drive west on the A66 through Elton, Sadberge and onto the town of Darlington. Home of the Darlington Railway Museum, here you can see the first passenger engine, Locomotion No. 1. Keep driving west along the A67 through Gainford and Winston and onto Barnard Castle. The castle was built in the 12th century and sits perched on a large rock above the River Tees. Nearby, you'll find a charming market town to explore before continuing your journey.



Essential Northeast UK Tour

Begin this tour in the town of Durham and visit the spectacular 1,000 year old Durham Cathedral, where you can climb 300 steps to the top of the main tower for unsurpassed views of the surrounding county. See Durham Castle and Crook Hall, then walk through the lovely streets of the old town. From here, you can take the more rural route along the A691 through to Consett and on to Hexham. Alternatively, head north from Durham on the A1 up to Newcastle. Here you can see the Tyne Bridges, the Seven Stories, the remains of the Castle Keep and Segedunum. Shop in the Central Arcade, visit great art galleries and top restaurants or even catch Newcastle United play at St. James Park.

Explore the rural countryside as you head to the historic market town of Hexham. From here, drive west along the A69 to Hadrian's Wall. This World Heritage Site stretches over 80 miles of Northumberland on the border with Scotland. See excavated Roman forts at Vindolanda, Chester & Houseteads.

Scotland

The country of Scotland forms part of the United Kingdom, and occupies the northern third of the island of the United Kingdom. Its capital city is Edinburgh which also doubles as one of Europe's largest financial districts. Although Scotland is beautiful all year round, the best time to visit is in August. The annual festivals and events are in full swing and you'll never run short of things to keep you busy.

Attractions

Edinburgh

Edinburgh Castle - A thousand year old castle which houses an assortment of artefacts

Hop-on, Hop off—Take a bus tour of Edinburgh

Glasgow

The Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum - See Scotland's most visited tourist site in Glasgow

Northern Scotland

Head to the Highlands - Take in the lush, vibrant hills and pastures of the Scottish Highlands

Hole in One - There are hundreds of spectacular courses around Scotland

Southern Scotland

Go Nessie Hunting - The first sighting of the Loch Ness Monster was in 1871 and with another famous encounter in 1961, visitors from the world are fascinated by 'Nessie'.

Hole in One - There are hundreds of spectacular courses around Scotland

Mount Stuart - A phenomenal neo-Gothic palace located on the Isle of Bute

Borders Abbeys Way - A day trip driving route linking the great abbeys of Kelso, Jedburgh, Melrose and Dryburgh

Events

January

Hogmanay – New Years Eve Festivities lasting for four days in and around Edinburgh

April

Beltane Fire Festival - An event based strongly in Scottish history marking the beginning of summer in Colton Hills, Edinburgh

May

Spirit of Speyside Whiskey festival– Four days of whiskey tastings and distillery tours in Edinburgh

June

Riding of the Marches, across Scotland – Parades, horse riding displays.

West End Festival – A two week party full of art and music in Glasgow

August

Edinburgh Military Tattoo- A spectacular military event

September

Linlithgow Folk Festival - A celebration of traditional and modern Scottish folk music

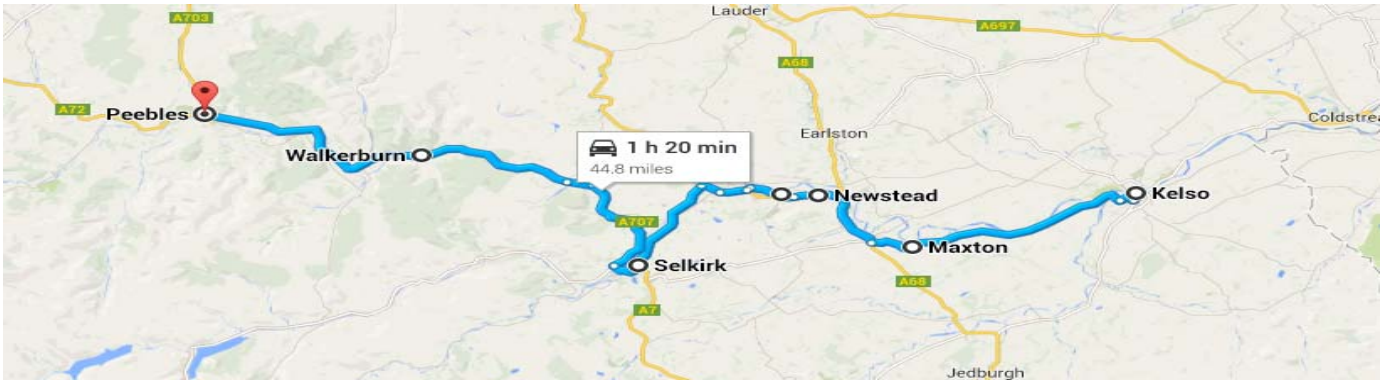
October

The Doric Festival - An event to honour the language, music and traditions of Scotland

Self Drive Tours: Scotland

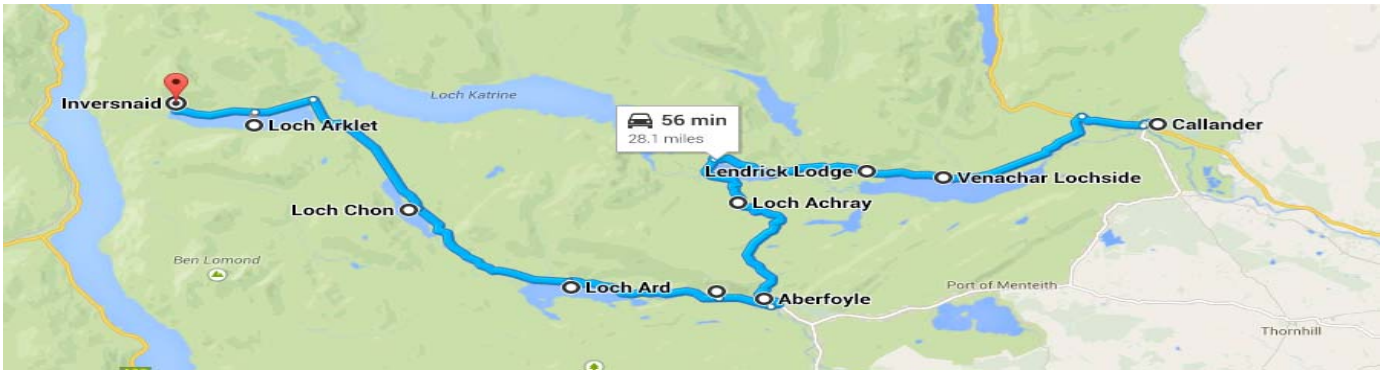
Tour the Valley of the Tweed

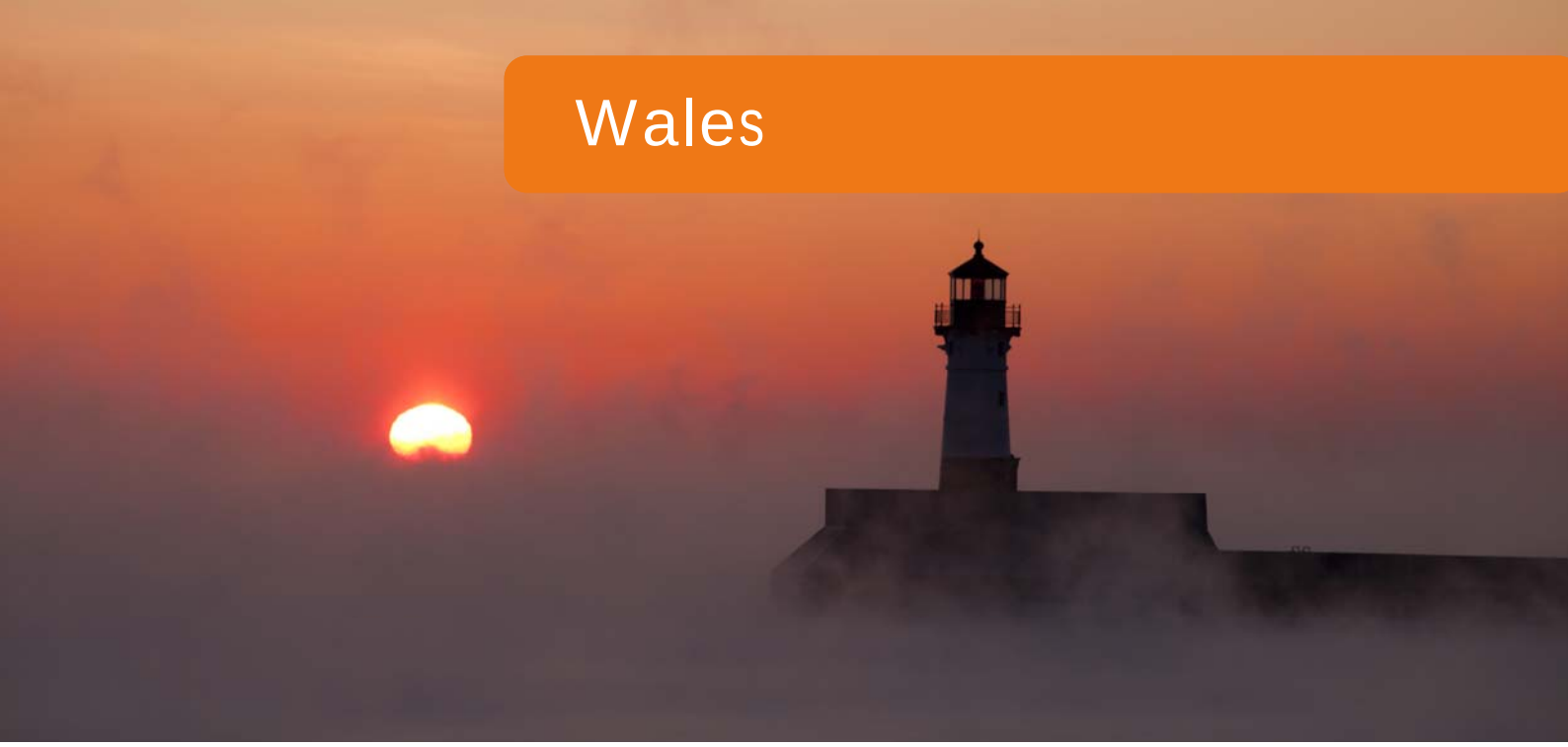
Follow the beautiful River Tweed on this delightful drive, stopping at pretty villages along the way. Begin in the town of Kelso, which has a lovely cobbled square surrounded by Georgian buildings and a welcoming atmosphere. Head west through Maxton and Newstead to Melrose. This pleasant town is at the junction of the Eildon Hills, which are covered with heather and are perfect for long walks. Here you will find Melrose Abbey and Abbotsford House. Follow the River Tweed through the villages of Selkirk, Walkerburn and Kirkburn and onto Peebles. This attractive and bustling town lies at the confluence of three rivers is home to wonderful town squares and plenty of historical monuments to keep you busy.



Experience the Troassachs

The Trossachs are located at the narrowest point of mainland Scotland, just north of Glasgow. Begin the tour in Callander, itself a maze of rivers, lochs, waterfalls and mountains. From here, follow the road along through Coilangtogle, past Loch Venachar and Lenderick. Continue on past Loch Achray and down to Aberfoyle. Follow the B829 through Milton, past Loch Ard, Loch Chon and Loch Arklet through to Inversnaid. This road will wind past wild natural environments and spectacular scenery. There are plenty of places to stop as you travel and activities such as hiking, cycling and mountain biking that are available along the way.





Wales

Famous for daffodils, leeks, St. David and the Red dragon and its unique language, Wales has fast become a favourite destination amongst holidaymakers. The capital, Cardiff, is located in the south of Wales and is its largest and most populous city. Visitors are attracted to the beautiful natural scenery, its distinct culture, and the country's wealth of history and architecture. Cardiff is known for its lively and diverse atmosphere. The city boasts a vibrant nightlife, exciting events and plentiful attractions, but has managed to retain its small town vibe. Wales is a most rewarding destination for a self drive holiday.

Attractions

The Gower Peninsula – Sandy beaches, limestone cliffs and easy walking trails

Brecon Beacons National Park – See all the natural colour and splendour of these rolling hills and grassy moors

Llandudno – Relax by the seaside or take on some extreme sports in the twin mountains, the Great Orme and Little Orme

Cardiff

Cardiff Castle - Tour this 1100 year old medieval castle

Cardiff Bay - Dine at one of the many restaurants or pubs, take a stroll along the boardwalk, visit the museums or take a look at the shops.

St. Fagan's National History Museum - Commonly referred to as the Museum of Welsh life

The National Museum and Art Gallery - This museum features a spectacular collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art

Techniquest - A science museum packed with hands on exhibits and exciting things to do

The Millennium Sports Stadium - One of the United Kingdom's best and biggest sporting stadiums

Events

March

Conwy Seed Fair - A 700 year old charter fair

July

Cardiff Castle Open Air Theatre - Traditional theatre with the city's phenomenal castle as its backdrop

Cardiff International Food and Drink Festival - Taste handmade chocolates and specialist liqueurs while listening to local music near the Cardiff Bay

August

Admiral Cardiff Big Weekend - The UK's largest free outdoor music festival located in front of the National Museum of Wales

Frocester Beer Festival - An extensive palate of beer, cider and wine enjoyed with Welsh food and tunes

October

Halloween in Cardiff Castle - Get dressed up and join the festivities around Cardiff, with special events and tours taking place at the castle

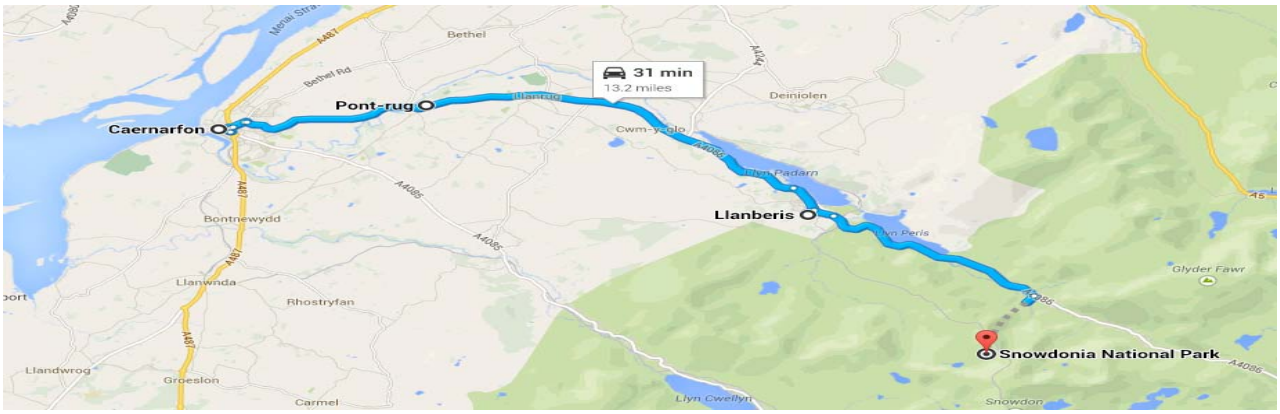
December

Royal Welsh Winter Fair - This event includes livestock and poultry judging, hand made crafts, floral arts and much more

Self Drive Tours: Wales

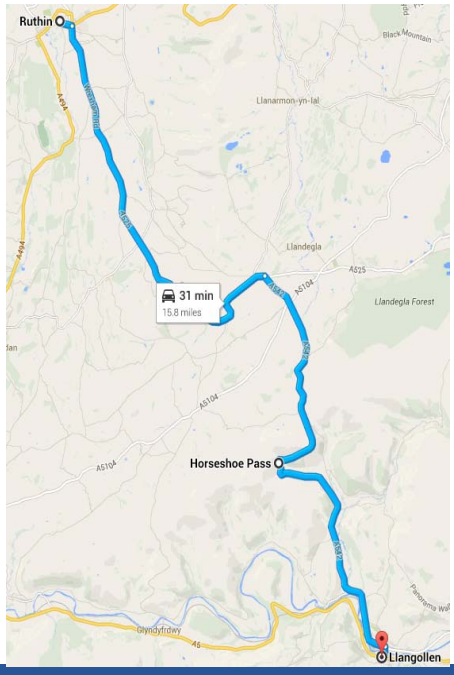
Snowdonia

Drive along the Llanberis Pass in Snowdonia, an area of rugged natural beauty with mountain ranges carved by the twin lakes of Llyn Padarn and Llyn Peris. Drive from the town of Caenarfon along the A4086, which will take you through Pont Rug and Llanberis. Here you'll see the remains of historic Dolbadarn Castle. Pass Pentre Castell and Nant Peris into the Snowdonia National park. There are plenty of outdoor activities, such as hiking and rock climbing. Be sure to stop and take in the stark, rough-hewn mountains and valleys.



The Horseshoe Pass

Travel through one of Wales' most popular natural attractions: The Horseshoe Pass. This drive follows the A542 from Ruthin to Llangollen and through the Clwydian range. Begin the tour in Ruthin, a small but attractive town set in the Vale of Cwlyd. Ruthin has plenty of interesting historical sites to keep you busy. When you're ready, head south on the A542 along Horseshoe Pass, enjoying the unique scenery. Be sure to take caution, as this drive has hairpin bends and may be tricky!



The Horseshoe Pass will take you to the town of Llangollen, set in the vale of Llangollen on the River Dee. In this lovely town you will find plenty of restaurants and cafes to choose from, in addition to great sights including the ruined castle of Dinas Bran and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

Northern Ireland

Discover Northern Ireland, a region in the north of the island of Ireland, but governed as part of the United Kingdom. Despite being part of the UK, there is still a distinctly Irish feel as you enter Northern Ireland, named one of Lonely Planet's Top 10 European Travel Destinations in 2013. Visit the magnificent Giant's Causeway and stroll the streets of Belfast on a fantastic adventure through the breathtaking country of Northern Ireland.

Attractions

County Antrim

The Giant's Causeway– One of Northern Ireland's most famous landmarks, made up of thousands of interlocking basalt columns as a result of an ancient volcanic eruption

The Bushmills Distillery– Ireland's oldest operating distillery

County Londonderry

The Walled City of Derry– The only fully walled city in Ireland

County Tyrone

Ulster American Folk Park– An open air museum illustrating the story of emigration to the US during the 18th & 19th centuries

County Fermanagh

The Lakelands– The Lakelands are a haven for both wildlife and sports enthusiasts, and offering spectacular scenery & woodlands

County Down

Discover the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down – Believed to be the inspiration behind C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia, see these majestic mountains, natural beauty and native wildlife

Round of Golf, Co.'s Antrim & Down – Pack the clubs and take a swing on Northern Ireland's famous fairways

Events

May

Carnival of Colours - An vibrant event full of street theatre, art and a variety of amusing side shows in St Columb's Park, County Derry

July

Lady of the Lake Festival - A 10 day affair packed with events in County Fermanagh

August

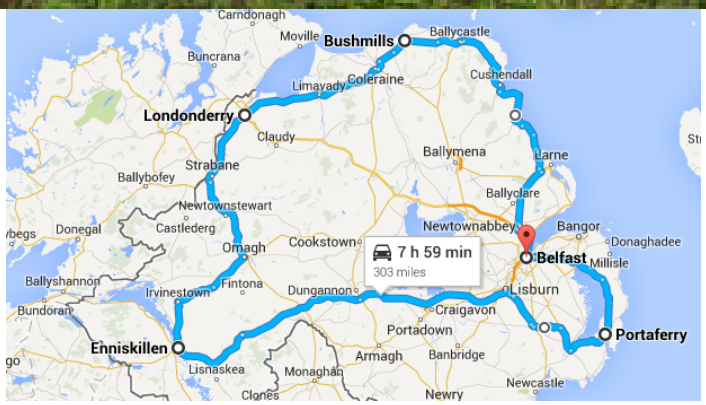
Hillsborough International Oyster Festival - Taste freshly shucked oysters while enjoying local music and entertainment in County Down

September

Appalachian and Bluegrass Music Festival - Take in a little Americana when American and European musicians come together in County Tyrone

Self Drive Tours: Northern Ireland

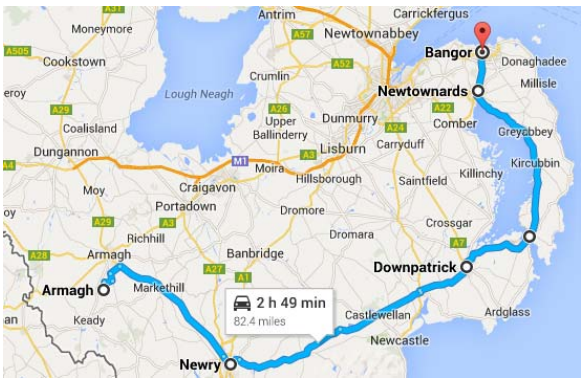
The Grand Tour



Follow this all encompassing, five day tour to see all most beautiful parts of Northern Ireland. Starting in Belfast, take the Causeway Coastal Route, pass through the nine Glens of Antrim and a series of other attractions, which you can stop to enjoy at your leisure. Spend the night in Bushmills, where you can tour the famous distillery. The next day, venture back to spend some time on the Giant's Causeway as you drive towards Londonderry for an overnight stay. Explore Londonderry, then take the B48 and A32 to Enniskillen to explore the town and surrounding areas. From here, you'll drive to Portaferry, a fantastic waterfront village accessible by car ferry via Strangford. After you've enjoyed the waterfront scenery and activities, head to Belfast, Northern Ireland's capital, for a taste of city life in this fabulous country. Click to vew a more detailed version of this route.

Grand St. Patrick's Tour, Counties Down & Armagh

Delve deep into Ireland's history through Saint Patrick's Tour. Begin in the city of Armagh where you can see the Anglican and the Roman Catholic St. Patrick's Cathedrals, the County Museum and Saint Patrick's Trian. Take the Darkley Road through 'the Fews' and scenic woodlands of Keady and Newtownhamilton to Newry, where you can visit Bagenal's Castle, the Killevy Old Churches founded in 517AD and Kilnasaggart Stone. Follow the Newry Road through Rathfriland, Castlewellan and Clough, through to the town of Downpatrick. Here you'll find the Struell Wells, the first holy wells in Ireland, the remains of the Inch Abbey that date back to 1180, the Saul Church, Down Cathedral and St Patrick's grave. Head to Strangford and take the car ferry to Portaferry, then follow the Portaferry Road to Greyabbey where you'll find the splendid ruins of a Cistercian Abbey. Heading north drive on to Newtownards and see the Movilla Abbey, then follow the N21 for Bangor where you can visit the north Down Museum and Bangor Abbey.



Belfast

This beautiful Victorian city is a city reborn; where old and new stand proudly side by side to create a charm and character that is truly unique. Belfast's areas can be divided into quarters: the Cathedral quarter is the oldest part of Belfast, with cobbled streets, historic pubs and fantastic restaurants; the Titanic Quarter has an incredible maritime and industrial history and is home to the magnificent Belfast Waterfront Hall; the Gaeltacht Quarter holds the city's descriptive wall murals and is home to Irish language and culture; and the Queen's Quarter houses some of the best eateries and pubs in Belfast.

Attractions

St Anne's Cathedral – This magnificent cathedral was built in 1776, with an incredible black & white marble maze inside

Belfast City Hall – This is the home of Belfast City Council as well as the Belfast Wheel, which offers fantastic views across the city

Belfast Castle – Located 400 feet above sea level, visit for breathtaking views of the Belfast Lough from the castle's position on top of Cave Hill

The Odyssey Arena – This is fast becoming Belfast's premier entertainment and leisure venue for international artists and exhibitions

The Zoological Gardens – Belfast Zoo is home to over 1,200 animals, where the focus is on conservation and education

Belfast Botanic Gardens – These gardens were established in 1895 next to the Queen's University, and are home to Belfast's most historical landmark, the Great Palm House

St. George Market – Operating as Friday market since 1604, you can taste & buy almost any local or regional produce

Titanic Boat Tour – Take a tour of the shipyard of Harland & Wolff, the birthplace of the infamous Titanic.

The Crown Liquor Saloon – Enjoy a Pint of Guinness in the National Trust-owned Crown Liquor Saloon

W5 – A science and information attraction where you can partake in interactive exhibits to learn about science and animation

Events

March/April

Belfast Film Festival – A showcase of the newest and best in local and international film, complete with classes, workshops and special events

May

10 Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival – Held over two weeks, this is a celebration of life and art

Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival – This is a festival for all the family, including music, children's exhibitions, boat tours and a tall ship race

July

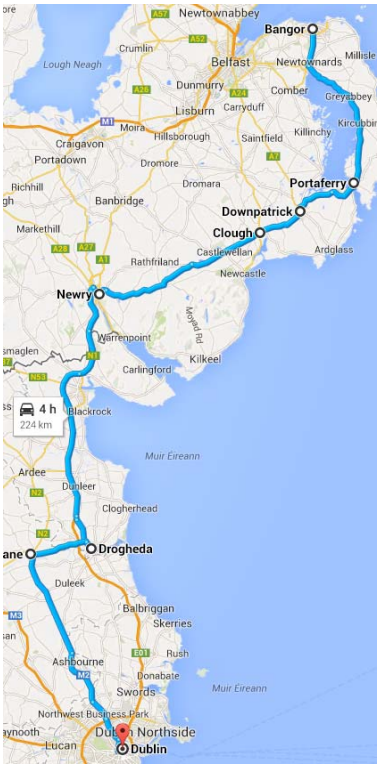
Rose Week – An amazing horticultural showcase held in Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park

August

Belfast Mela - A festival of world music, dance, fashion, food and fun at the Botanic Gardens

Shoreline Festival - A waterfront music festival with family activities, a variety of musical performances and sport and an array of other amusements

Self Drive Tours: Belfast



Belfast to Dublin

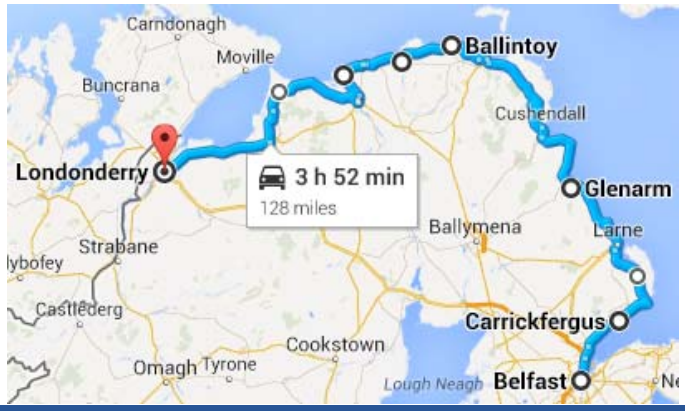
Drive from Bangor near Belfast along the A2 coast road to the seaside town of Ballywater, head west to Greyabbey, then south on the A20 to Portaferry. Take the car ferry over Strangford Lough to Downpatrick to visit St. Patrick's grave on Cathedral Hill.

Drive through Clough and on to Newcastle where the Mournes "sweep down to the sea", then on to the fishing port of Kilkeel. Follow the A2 along the coast to Rostrevor, through Warrenpoint and along to Newry. From Newry, travel south toward Dublin, through Dundalk, stopping off at Drogheda to see the prehistoric tombs at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth. See where St. Patrick lit the first paschal fire at Slane before continuing on to Dublin.

The Causeway Coastal Route

This is rated as one of the top 5 scenic drives in the world, running from Belfast Lough to Londonderry with an incredible mosaic of fishing villages, quiet beaches, rugged coastlines, mountains and magnificent scenery. Leave Belfast and join the Causeway Coastal Route at Newtownabbey. Enjoy the view of Belfast Lough to the right as you head further west toward the seaside town of Carrickfergus, home to the well-preserved 12th century Norman castle. Drive on through Kilroot and to Larne, the gateway to the beautiful Glens of Antrim, and follow the Antrim Coast Road where you can enjoy the breathtaking scenery.

Drive on through to the lovely town of Cushendon and Torr Head, along to Ballintoy where you can walk across the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge spanning a 24 metre chasm. If you veer inland you can visit the world's oldest licensed distillery in the village of Bushmills. From there you can head back to the coast to the UNESCO World Heritage listed site of the Giant's Causeway. See the romantic ruins of Dunluce Castle near Bushmills, and drive on to the lively seaside resorts of Portrush and Portstewart, then to the beautiful Bann Valley and market town of Ballymoney. Visit Mussenden Temple along by Castlerock towards Limavady, then take a walk on the remote beaches at Benone or Downhill. You can then travel on through the lovely Roe Valley, through Limavady to Londonderry, the only completely walled city in the British Isles.



Stay Healthy & Stay Safe

Stay Healthy

Your comprehensive travel insurance will cover any medical costs including medical evacuation, but you should make sure that your insurance covers you for the entire duration of your trip and be clear on what is not included. In case of an emergency, go to your nearest hospital for treatment. The Australian Government has a reciprocal health care agreement with the Government of the United Kingdom that gives Australians access to free emergency medical services, but does not provide for any ongoing treatment of existing health conditions. For non-urgent ailments, go to the local medical centre or NHS walk in centre where you will be billed for the treatment.

Plan for the continuing care of pre-existing conditions before you leave. Bring your medications in their original and clearly labelled containers with a declaration from your doctor describing your medical conditions and medicine needed. Pharmacies and chemists carry most prescriptions, however it can be expensive, so it's best to have your prescriptions filled before you go. Carry these medicines and a letter from your GP explaining your medical conditions.

Stay Safe

Travelling in the UK is not dangerous, but a level of caution should always be taken when touring in any foreign country. The majority of crimes tend to occur in the larger cities where tourists can be targeted for petty crimes. The best advice is to keep your valuables close to your body and out of reach from potential thieves, avoid lonely streets out of hours and don't flash your wealth and make yourself an obvious target.

Car break-ins, theft, smash and grab and vandalism on tourists vehicles can occur, but can generally be prevented by keeping valuables or bags out of sight, securely locking cars or using off-street supervised parking. In the unlikely event of theft or loss, be sure to inform all your credit card companies as soon as you discover your wallet has been lost or stolen. Most credit card companies have toll free numbers to call if your cards are lost or stolen, and they may be able to issue an emergency replacement card or wire you a cash advance.

Emergency

Call 999 or 112 for police, ambulance or fire service.

Money Matters

Currency

The currency of the United Kingdom is the pound sterling (£). Notes come in £5, £10, £20 and £50 denominations, and coins come in 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2. You'll often hear the pound referred to colloquially as a "quid".

Currency Exchange

Foreign currency can be exchanged at Bureau de Change at international airports and major city centres, as well as banks, post offices and some hotels.

Banking Hours

Standard banking hours are Monday to Friday 9.00-9.30am until 3.30-4.00pm, Many bank branches stay open late once a week until 5:30 or 6:00pm, and are often open on Saturdays as well (9:00-9:30am until 12:30-3:30pm). Banks in England and Wales remain open over lunch, but many banks in Scotland and Northern Ireland close for an hour at lunch.

ATMs

ATMs are located almost everywhere in the UK, except in the smallest villages.

Tax

Value Added Tax – VAT – is a mandatory 20% tax on most goods and services in the UK. Generally the VAT is included in the ticketed price, however some larger, more expensive goods may not have the VAT included.

Credit & Debit Cards

American Express, Visa and MasterCard are all widely accepted across the UK. Credit cards can be used in larger businesses, whilst the smaller businesses prefer debit cards. The Chip and PIN system has been active since 2006, so you will have the option of either entering a PIN or signing for your purchases.

Tipping

Tipping is not common practice in the United Kingdom, although restaurants and cafés that provide good service could expect around 10-15% tip. In pubs with food or drinks ordered and served at the bar no tip is required.

Useful Information

Language

Both English is the common language in the United Kingdom. Though you may here some Welch if you travel through Wales, everyone will still speak English fluently.

Geography

The United Kingdom is a sovereign state located off the north western coast of continental Europe. The total area is approximately 243,610 square kilometres, and includes the island of the UK, Northern Ireland, located on the north eastern portion of the island of Ireland, and many smaller surrounding islands. The UK lies between the North Atlantic and the North Sea, and comes within 35 km of the north west coast of France, from which it is separated by the English Channel.

Time Zone

The United Kingdom is on the following time zones, depending on the time of year:
Greenwich Mean Time (From 26 October to 30 March)
British Summer Time (UTC +1 from 30 March to October 26)

Where to Get Help

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We look forward to hearing from you!

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